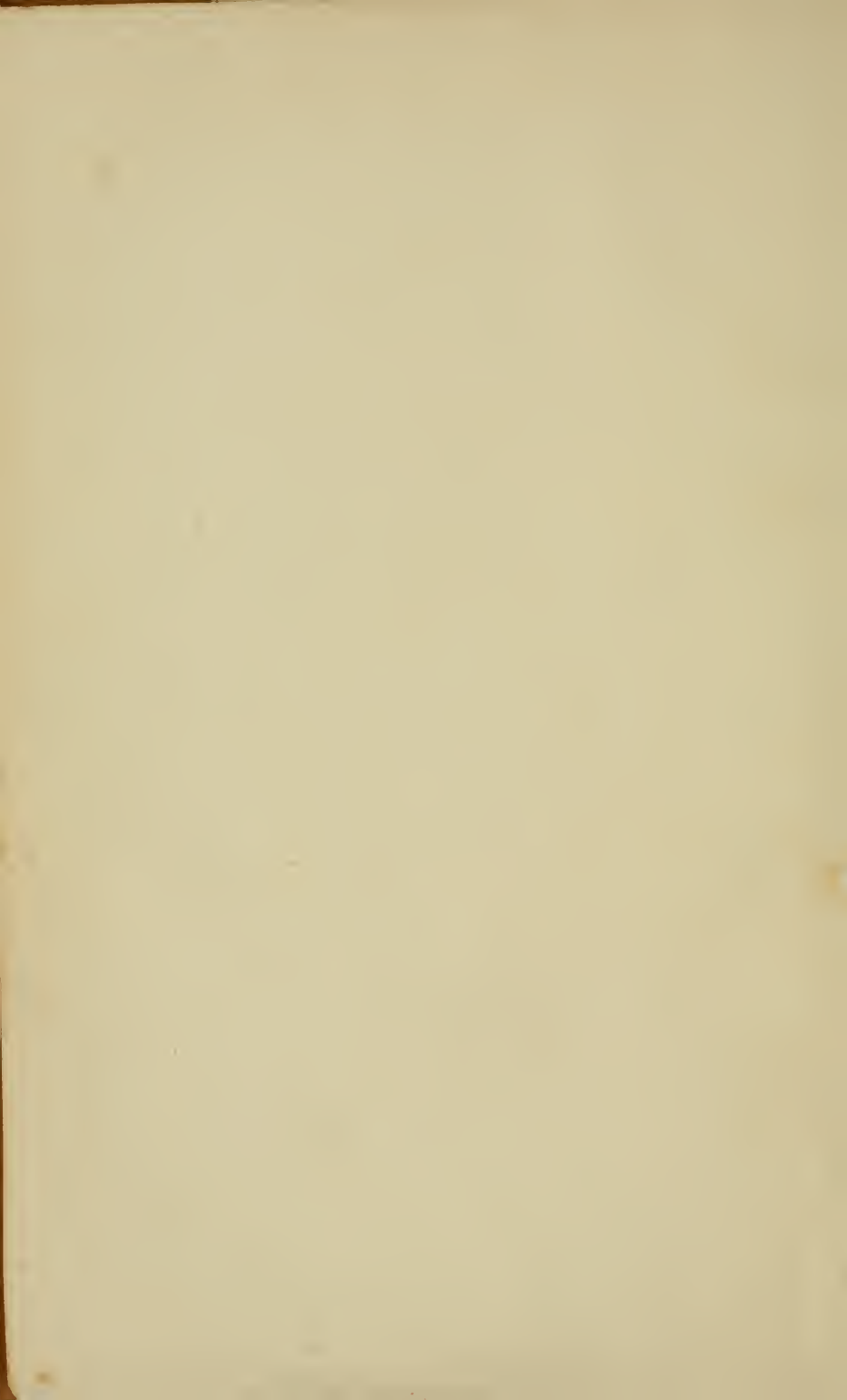




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# SOME NEW PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS.

By THE EDITOR OF  
"THE CONTEMPORARY REVIEW."

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## SOME NEW PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS.

*An Inquiry into the Process of Human Experience : attempting to set forth its Lower Laws ; with some Hints as to the Higher Phenomena of Consciousness. By WILLIAM CYPLES. London, 1880.*

THE book named above has now been before the public for more than a year. Having been myself interested by a first perusal of it, I have watched with some curiosity the reception it has met with from the critics. The precise degree of praise or blame given to his performance, the author may be left to measure for himself, with what philosophy the writing of a big treatise on that topic may have bestowed. But in what quarters appreciation has been shown, and in what others non-appreciation, of what purports to be, and I believe is, an original book in the higher field of thinking, is a matter of more public significance. A consideration of it will tell us something of the present intellectual activity of literary and philosophical criticism among us. I think I may, with interest to the reader, combine that aim, more or less, with the main purpose of the present paper, namely, to give some account of Mr. Cycles's volume itself.

Let me at once say that it is very curious, and must be significant of the condition of criticism, that the writers in several religious organs have quite failed to see that the book is a quarry from which may be got a variety of reasonings, each one of which is as a weapon in the hands of those who hold anti-materialistic views. These arguments, it is true, are not used by Mr. Cycles to point any doctrinal conclusions ; but none the less there they are in his pages ; and the very fact that he has come upon them, as it seems, in a mere way of exhaustively inquiring into psycho-physiological matters, irrespective of dogmatic bias, might have been urged by the champions of spiritual beliefs as a recommendation, rather than otherwise. The critics on that side appear, so far as I can judge, to have been confused, and, in some cases, perhaps, one should say, alarmed, by the large extent to which Mr. Cycles uses the language of the physicists. But they ought

to be able to detect new psychical and physiological affirmations favourable to them (for the book purports, as I will show directly, to make a number of these), even if they are presented in the terms which the physicists employ. But a further remark requires to be made in order to state fully the explanation which is suggested to my own mind of the attitude which most of the writers in the theological reviews have taken up as to the volume. It is easy to see that all who hold orthodox views will be certain to be honestly dissatisfied by what will appear to them the altogether too large admissions it makes of the scientists' explanations of the physiological process of human consciousness, and of the reign of physical law in the world. That is a fair controversy, which the author must wage for himself. I am not, in this paper, going to intermeddle in it. I limit myself to repeating, that, in my own opinion, something which is the opposite of acuteness has been shown by the critics on that side in not recognizing a series of new reasonings available for their ends, because they were not couched in doctrinal shibboleths. The writer of one of the reviews of the book which I happened to read in a denominational publication made it a first objection to it, that, in an early chapter of this psycho-physiological Inquiry, the author has stated that a nervous system acting specifically, with adequate blood supply, &c., is needed for human consciousness. This is rather depressing when looked at as marking the mental level at which in those quarters philosophical criticism stands at this moment. It is tantamount to accusing Mr. Cyples of having wilfully and heretically invented such things as swoon, sleep, and death. I think he may fairly plead that he did not do so, but that he has only reasoned about them long after they were in existence.

I have turned to this aspect of the book first of all, but I scarcely expect the writer of "The Process of Human Experience" will feel that he owes anybody many thanks who does so. I infer that he would like what he would call the scientific element in the work to be first put forward. His treatment of the complicated problem of "Attention;" his tracking out of the working rules of the Association of Ideas; his more detailed appreciation of the use in intellectual operation of the Language-faculty; these would be, I suppose, the parts of the book he would wish to be earliest looked at. He has a passion for framing formulas, generalizing laws, and coining fresh and very unattractive words and phrases; doing this with what seems to me a very droll obtuseness to the fact that the ordinary reader wishes to have, not as much as possible, but as little as may be of this sort of thing. Even the most favourable critics—at least, all whose notices I have perused—agree that the book is very hard reading. Mr. Cyples has made his own defence on this score, in a paper published in *Mind*, entitled, "Four New Philosophical Terms;" but I am sure that he has underestimated the obstacles in the way of getting a new nomenclature accepted.



In my own opinion, too, there are special difficulties just now hindering the success of such an experiment, owing to the thinkers in the realm of English philosophy who for more than a generation past have had the public ear, studiously avoiding technology in their works. Certain critics of Mr. Mill state that they find his language loose when it is strictly scrutinized,—Professor Stanley Jevons has said so in these pages,—but it is undeniable that it has an appearance of lucidness. Mr. Darwin uses a few catch-phrases, but they are free from what is commonly meant by technicality, and, in fact, the ease of his style has greatly helped the spreading of his views. Professors Huxley and Tyndall have each a rare art of making plain what they urge; and Professor Bain is only a little less a master of simple statement. Mr. Matthew Arnold, of late years, has seemed to accumulate a phraseology of his own; but it consists not of new terms but of parts of sentences, familiar enough when the words are taken separately, and only made special by allotment to a particular meaning, and by a strenuous iteration afterwards in their use. In Mr. Herbert Spencer's works, a nomenclature of some intricacy is to be met with, but he, again, has shown much skill in habituating his readers to it. If Mr. Cycles says, as I gather he does, that in arriving at what he believes to be new conclusions, he found that the mental process developed these new terms of expression, and that he has had to work with them, it has to be allowed that he knows best what happened in his own case. All that he has now to do is to get the public to use his terminology, and to speak of "the neurotic diagram," "egoistic-actualisation," "the Executive System," &c. I myself think that he would have made his task not a little easier if he had just reversed the order of the contents of his volume, and begun with what is now the ending of it,—that is, the portion in which the use of the technology is the least frequent. Anyhow that is the plan which I, who wish to do what I think a notable book a service, find my judgment suggests.

In Chapter XXI., that is, in the last chapter, if we except the short conclusion of the work, the author deals with "Art: its Functions." I should like to let him speak at once for himself, by quoting the opening sections defining Art generally, or else by giving a novel hypothesis he puts forward on the once much-debated question of the origin of the Sublime. But I will go on to a shorter passage, where an explanation of the puzzle as to what may be called the emotional excess which has always been noted in the case of Music is thus hinted at:—

"The emotional charm of Music has struck men as a great mystery. There appears to be no doubt that it gets all the marvellous effects it has beyond the mere pleasing of the ear, from its random but multitudinous summonses of the efferent-activity, which at its vague challenges stirs unceasingly in faintly tumultuous irrelevancy. In this way, Music arouses aimlessly, but splendidly, the sheer, as yet unfulfilled, potentiality within us."

Throughout this chapter, great use is made of the function ascribed to "the efferent-activity." For instance, our author, in considering the question which has bulked rather largely in critical literature of late, what bearings morality has on Art, thus speaks:—

"Before Art can effeminate, it must become petty; before it can make us morbid, it must descend to gross realism. So long as Art keeps the sense-impressions on which it relies large and noble, and does not carry them into such grouped detail as to give precise cues to the efferent impulses, the question of morality has no relevancy to it. Its true purpose is then seen clear and full—that of habituating us to larger living by fragmentary exercises of the actualising-process on a scale more magnificent than the previous practical experiences. But, for this, the inflations of the personality must be general: the Art inspirations must be left broad and anonymous, to be allotted definitely hereafter in some way of conduct. The efferent-activity must preserve its own real reminiscences intact; Art, or what passes for it, cannot touch those without killing them. Nor can Art be saved from its own corruption but by timely periodical infusions of the Sublime."

Further on, there is a passage as to the province of the Comic in Art, which may be quoted:—

"Art always stirs the ultimate sense of the human fortune, by either pretending that the world is lighter, gayer, easier than it had before seemed, or by arousingly challenging us ourselves to be nobler, larger, gigantic, in facing its difficulties. In both these cases, though in different ways, what is vitally concerned is the efferent-activity. . . . The Comic seems to borrow in its own queer manner from both the realms just mentioned. It is true, it must not present the world as really gay and light, having the appearance of being wholly trivial—that would give no comicality at all. On the other hand, its rough catastrophes must not fully challenge right sympathetic activity in us. This is saying, that while comicality apes seriousness, it must really be without permanent ill consequences. In fact, both the above Art-functions are in Humour essayed together, but are transposed in the fulfilling, and so are alike more-or-less nullified, though not before much gratification has been had. In Humour we have a burlesque appeal to the sense of human fortune, making of it nothing but fun; doing this by means of sheer blunder, stupidity, and miscarriage. The reason of the perennial popular charm of Humour is at once seen when this is remembered—it lies in comicality utterly resting the ordinary efferent-activity and relaxing the strain of every sensory nervous co-ordination. Comedy, taken in the broad meaning, asks for its full success even moderate ugliness in the persons most concerned in it, with awkwardness of gesture, inexact speech, irrelevancy of doing. But this is exactly the same as the eye, ear, &c., only half-attending; the first rude infantile groupings of the sense-activities again become sufficient, easing all the laboured additions of the later acquired nervous co-ordinations; and further, in spite of a great bustle and pother,—for this there must be the show of,—there is nothing to be done but to sit still and behold. The easily-afforded energy which is stirred by the first cues of this make-believe, bubbles away in laughter; the man finding himself perfectly efficient without an effort, for all obligation of duty is given up. Is it wonderful that most men like it?"

Another quotation will describe what is classified by the author as the realm of the lightly amusing. He says:—

"This realm of the lightly amusing is extensive. At its best it rises into glories of elegance and beauty, but, in the extremes, it descends to tinsel and fligree; and, for the furthest, lowest, dimmest points of it, mere gimcrack is enough. It would, however, save much well-intentioned but somewhat stupid

criticism condemning the unreality of the theatre, protesting against a kind of preposterousness in some parts of our dress, and in the upholstering of certain apartments in our houses, and as being also shown in some of the manners allotted to the more leisurely hours of social intercourse, if it were borne in mind that, beneath the grotesqueness, these things have a real use in the sudden and complete disengagement of our ordinary efforts of attention, new adjustments being in these ways challenged in their place. It is easy to ridicule the circumstance of the chief room in every house being tricked out in a style which would seem to be only befitting if we were sophisticated fairies playing at an ornamental domesticity for a few hours now-and-again of an evening; also, there undeniably is palpable absurdity in opera being performed in a foreign language, and the full dress of both sexes, though in different kinds, has an admitted preposterousness. All that can be said on the other hand is, that universal experience shows this artificiality to be in a manner natural; since alongside the world of business and of practical life, a long-descended, shining, holiday tradition of an opposite, unserious sphere, wholly unlike common reality, has had to be kept up by sheer way of balance. Periodically, the artificiality grows ridiculously elaborate; amusement becomes more laborious than work,—the two almost exchange places. Then, Satire finds its true duty in exposing the failure, and effecting a sobering through the freshness of a return to plain reality; the laying aside the ponderous triviality being a temporary relief and recreation. But there is an abiding need for positive, unmitigated relaxation. The proper test is, whether the influence of the artificiality is to really lighten the spirits; if so, this second function of Art is discharged by it. Criticism must wait for depression setting in—the ceasing of a light, natural laughter is Satire's due signal."

I am tempted to find space for yet another passage, where the writer—still inquiring into the explanation of the feeling of Sublimity—argues that in Terror there is always a perception of more than Novelty. He observes:—

"A mountain with no scars upon its sides telling of the rage of storms; no dizzying sheer descents of plunging precipice; no gulfs; no inaccessible peaks; but a mountain showing all gradual, smooth, shining,—this would not be sublime in the second of the two senses above specified, no matter what its mere size. To give it sublimity of that kind you must mark it with violence. It needs here-and-there singeing and seaming with traces of the flaming thunderbolt; fringes of black struggling pines must show dwarfed and painful on the narrow edges of its unsheltering cliffs; you must hang somewhere amidst its higher snows the fatal avalanche, held only by creaking faulty chains of ice; the beaked-and-taloned eagle has to sweep and soar about its cliffs; it must have mysterious ravines, usually black with silence, in which you know lie bleaching the bones of victims of the precipices and the eagles—those dark abysses changing at times into the sudden crash and roar of unexplained tumult. The secret of the fearful addition to sublimity thus got is this,—that each circumstance in that list covers a nervous disintegration."

There is a good deal more in the chapter that must be left unnoticed here—the author's views of the function of Tragedy, and of a certain art-effect which he looks for from the progress of physical science. Literature he styles the final department of Art, doing so on the ground that, by employing words as its medium, "it alone can use multiformity of associations, being able in a single phrase to mix the cues for starting several senses." But it may take some readers by surprise to find what is the writer's last word on this subject of Art: it is a long way from being wholly eulogistic. He says:—

“Though Art, using the term with the above understood limitation, and reserving Literature, is able to give prompt, large actualisations of the Ego at an easy low level of untransformed, or very little transformed sensory-experience, yet, apart from the provisional uses we have spoken of,—viz., filling up otherwise empty spaces in life, restfully alternating attention, &c.,—none of these egoistic-actualisations can be estimated as of much intrinsic value. They only occupy the intervals between man’s better living. Not only cannot Art give the very highest complexities of sentiency, substituting the egoistic-actualisations which are rendered by Conduct, but at the times it is having sway, it must preclude these by a preoccupation of the sensory apparatus peripherally. The nervous system has to work the other way—from the interior—in all heightenings of character. As compared with Conduct, Art has small subtlety, little intricacy of inter-appeal to the consciousness, but only masses some simpler forms of sentiency; it necessarily offers no reality answering to that of personal relationships stirred by practical doing. It is owing to this deficiency that many men seeking after what is termed spirituality are prompted so greatly to dispense with Art; though, let us hasten to add, if they neglect it wholly they do so at the risk of becoming narrow from the sheer lack of the larger habituations of the nervous-apparatus which it gives—these being always needed at some points.”

Very likely, a reader of the above extracts who may happen to have also seen some of the critiques I earlier hinted at, speaking of the volume as written in an involved, confused, “Latinised” or “Grecised” style, will be a little perplexed at not finding the reading more difficult. Two of Mr. Cyples’s largely-used technical phrases—*i.e.*, “egoistic-actualisation” and “efferent-activity”—are brought into play; but for the rest, I myself believe that I see in the passages I have given traces of a practised, ready pen. The fact is, that the critics who have spoken in this way of the style of the author, have confused the deliberate and studied adoption of a set technology, used in perfect, and I may add relentless consistency, with a lack of ability to write simple composition. The above citations are from the plainest portion of the book, but the plainness there is owing merely to the absence of the new technical terms which are used so copiously elsewhere; and in any part of the book, the skill in composition, allowing for the nature of the topics dealt with, reappears whenever the use of the terminology is suspended.

I can conceive that the author had a misgiving that some of his reviewers would make the blunder of not knowing a technology when they saw it, and that he nearly wholly dispensed with it in the writing of this chapter, as providing himself with a trap wherein to catch them. If he did so, he has succeeded, for they have fallen right into it. At the same time, convicting your critics of not knowing their own business by first laying in their way a temptation to rail at your volume is not the height of wisdom in an author, and I think Mr. Cyples would have done much better to have made his book easier reading throughout. But he may, if he will, fairly retort that there is certainly some defect of skill in philosophical criticism among us at this moment when it makes no distinction between an author’s purposed and careful use of a technical vocabulary, and mere ineptitude in

composition. If the reader finds any of the latter in the preceding quotations, he will do what I have not done.

But I wish to give some account of the book as a whole. Adequately to notice in a single article a volume dealing connectedly with all the fundamental questions of philosophy, and which in doing so itself occupies over eight hundred pages, is not easy. It is made the harder by the unusually large claims the author puts forward for originality, alike in matters of observed facts and of explanatory hypotheses. I will, first of all, attempt a rough catalogue of the leading instances.

Mr. Cyples, then, asserts that, by the observing of minute facts, which he specifies, connected with reverie, the management of Attention, &c., he has made out what he styles an initiatory law of human experience to this purport,—that no one of the senses can operate so as to give the consciousness belonging to it without a certain *aggregation* of its activity, which is only got by the associated working of muscular machinery connected with it. Obviously, this is a subtle point, but it is also a very important one, as any one will discover who notes the use the alleged generalization is made of in the author's detailed explanations of the puzzling phenomena of Attention; of the facts which have recently been made the basis of what is called the doctrine of Relativity; and of the circumstance that the conceptions of Space and Time enter into all our experience. I cannot myself say that I am satisfied the evidence the author puts forward is ample enough to demonstrate his case; I think that it should have been worked out with more particularity; but there is no denying that the alleged law seems, at the least, to throw a good deal of light on the process of Attention. It is only fair to quote a few words from the author's statement. He says:—

“Each of the senses is always being acted upon; the skin never fails to be in contact with something; there is no door to the passage of the ear; light can penetrate the eyelid when dropped; and the temperature of the air surrounding us is ever rising and falling.”

“Everybody knows that we can have eyes open in broad daylight without seeing; that the ear may be fully vibrating without our hearing; and so with all the other senses.”

“In smell, there is movement of the nostril; in taste there is always a degree of pressure.”

“The allotment of the special sense-organs in the bodily frame—in particular the spreading of the apparatus of touch over nearly the whole external superficies, with the partial extension of it internally, in the mouth, &c.—make it impracticable for the muscular machinery (except when operating below the *minimum* fixed by the Law of Effectiveness) to act isolatedly.”

“Immobility of the motory apparatus connected with the different senses, no matter how slight or momentary it may be, arrests experience in respect of the sense. Fix the eye, and if you do it completely, you cease to see; give over altering pressure, and the sensation of touch stops.”

“In every sensation, there mingles the experience of Time and Space, which all thinkers now agree must involve the action of the muscular sense.”

The writer argues that we manage our Attention, alike in the way of observing any object more closely and in purposed ceasing to attend, by

an acquired power of volitionally and automatically controlling this *coincidence* in activity between any sense and the muscular machinery having connection with it. In the *dissociation* of this conjoint activity through over-use, the influence of narcotics, &c., he finds the explanation of fatigue, swoon, sleep, &c.

As forming the second novelty of importance may be named the striking hypothesis on the subjects of Pleasure and Pain, propounded in Chapter III. So far as the problem of the phenomenon of Pain is not wholly shirked by the modern philosophers who found their psychology on physiology, the solution hinted at is that pain is the accompaniment of any abatement of vitality. This is the view of both Professor Bain and Mr. Spencer. But the explanation has not satisfied Mr. Cyples. In a long passage he points out what he terms the "irrationality" and irrelevancy which pain shows when it occurs. He says that some injuries and some diseases do not cause pain in anything like a degree proportionate to their abatement of vitality; while, on the other hand, the tortures of corns and toothache are, he affirms, penalties great enough for bad emperors who have abused the purple by all excesses of wrong indulgence. He points also to the fact, that anæsthetics, &c., can blot out pain. The hypothesis put forward by himself is to the effect that pain arises whenever a nervous grouping is "disintegrated" by being made to act in a way of partial non-repetition of its former full activity.

The view is followed out into minute detail; eight sub-laws being traced as operating in the occurrence of pain. I must confine myself to quoting a single passage:—

"The experience of fatigue, or tiring, offers a striking example of the law. It is an experiment within everybody's power. Put out the arm, leaving it to sustain its own weight. It will not be long before the not unsatisfactory sensation got from integrating the vigorous muscular co-ordinations decreases; the feeling will shortly turn into one of discomfort; if the position be preserved it will become painful. Rapidly the experience will be that of torment, and it is possible to make the pain accumulate to agony. What has happened to cause this alteration of experience? A progressive disintegration of the nervous co-ordinations, as one bundle of fibres after another becomes disabled in use."

The working of this alleged law is exemplified by instances given of all kinds, taken from the mental and moral as well as the sensory regions of our experience. That the reviewers of the book in publications whose main business is the defence of spiritual beliefs have not seen the favourable significance of this new speculation for their side, is one of the things which I have before said is to me surprising. Mr. Cyples, with the reticence in that direction which is a characteristic of his volume, stops short of urging the theory to its extreme point; but there is no question that if this hypothesis can be established, it cuts right into the heart of Materialism, striking at the very key of its chief position. I will cite just two or three sentences scattered in this and

other chapters, and which, I venture to think, ought to have been noted keenly by the critics:—

“Pain, as a first rough definition, may be said to be a protest which consciousness makes against its own dwindling.”

“In pain, the consciousness is somehow in excess of the lessened physical activity then in use. . . . Non-impression affects us, and becomes a real event in our experience.”

“The egoistic experience, in cases of pain, is not merely made feeble, or faint, or narrow; it is vividly ill, intensely self-unsatisfactory.”

“How comes pain to be, if Mind is only constituted in proportionate quantification by the neurotic-diagram then existing?”

It scarcely needs to be indicated to the reflective reader that all this reasoning points straight to the substantiality of the Ego, and its more or less independence (after it is actualized by and in sensation) of physical conditions;—these being the very cardinal points which the anti-materialists have to prove. Mr. Cycles’s hypothesis of Pain, in a word, affects all the controversial reasoning on these subjects.

He has a related theory of Pleasure which, in the case of “sensory-experience,” he works out into what he proposes as a strict Law of the Beautiful. In the case of all the specific kinds of sensations, whether in colours, odours, taste, touch, &c., he affirms that the secret of their pleasurable-ness consists in their offering “accumulation of consciousness by multiplying identical impression.”

Not attempting to observe any strict order in cataloguing points which seem to me to be new, I may go at once to a novel view which occurs in the chapter on “The Will.” After conceding all the facts that the most rigid Determinists posit, the author leaves their final conclusion quite in the air by a series of subtle hypothetical suggestions, based on what seems to be a minuter observing of the physiological process of Conduct than has hitherto been made. I can only hint at his method. He thus sums up the objections which the scientists urge against Will:—

“It is mathematically demonstrable that any arrest, alteration, or extra occurrence of a physical process necessarily implies increase of Energy, and ultimately of mass of Matter in the world. . . . Any conceivable alteration in the prior order of atoms, centres of force, or elemental activities, reckoned in any terms of Motion, must, in fact, have the effect of *increasing the sum total.*”

But, in pursuing his exhaustive statement of the case, the writer points out that the mathematical calculus is not as yet perfect enough to deal particularly with all actual quantities. He says that if the increments of energy needed to make valid the persuasion we have of physical sequence being altered in our activity in Conduct, be below a certain limit of size and frequency, the present calculus cannot pronounce that the increments are not “masked” in the ordinary mundane dynamics. Next he makes a curious inquiry into the size and the frequency of the increments of energy which might subserve the needs of a Conduct that should be definable as moral in the old meaning of the word. In the course of the inquiry he affirms that in the case of the lower order of volitions,—

those connecting with the passions,—“ ideatory-cerebration ” ceases in the same quantitative proportion as muscular exertion takes place ; while he asserts that where the higher matters of Conduct are concerned— in every instance of which restraint of automatic impulse is seen— the above rule is precisely reversed, there being increase of ideation and abatement of habitual muscular activity. For this, he states, addition of cerebral structure is needed, but—and here is the significant point—the increment of energy required for it may be infinitesimal. But whence comes the addition of energy, and what determines its granting ? Here our author brings in an alleged “ duplicity of faculty ” in the Ego, in proof of which he quotes the facts on which the modern doctrine of Relativity rests ; and to this faculty, he says, if Conduct is not wholly illusory, must be ascribed a potentiality for which the best available name is “ aspiration ”—the opportunity for its exercise or non-exercise arising when previously-acquired cerebral structure is in full use, which it always is when Conscience is acting. As matter of fact, he points out that all the men in whom experience rises highest, affirm that if “ aspiration ” be exercised, a law or a Force comes into play by which a positive increase of energy is given from and by a Creative Source.

But, surprising to say, a writer of one of the critiques I have seen of this book, in a religious publication, thinks that the above reasoning is materialistic. On the other hand, Mr. James Sully, in his appreciative review of the volume in *Mind*, spoke of it, I remember, as the author’s “ new mysticism.” If these views be “ mysticism,” it is stated in a severely scientific form ; and it would seem that if “ physicists,” with the mental habitudes given by their studies, are ever to reach Faith, it must be along some such lines.

I had marked a number of other topics as to which the writer claims to have worked out original scientific conclusions. He explains that the fundamental process of the Intellect consists in our making our own “ efferent-activities ” represent, and practically measure, the larger operations of the physical world ; he seems, in considering the difficult question of Attention, to establish as a fact that the “ unit of impression ” and “ the unit of consciousness ” are not the same ; in his detailed inquiry into the Laws of the Succession of Ideas, he formulates no fewer than fifteen generalizations, as explaining what he terms the permutation of thought. I may just mention with respect to this last-named inquiry, that, in reading it, I was reminded that the late Mr. G. H. Lewes, in the last volume of his “ Problems of Life and Mind,” states that, as far back as 1868, Mr. Cyples communicated to him a newly-framed law upon the Association of Ideas. I note that the law as there quoted by Mr. Lewes is modified in the present book,—see p. 182. Chapter IV. is devoted to explaining a theory of the author as to the mechanism of Memory. In it, he asserts that for remi-



niscence cerebral fibres must "repeat the activity they underwent in the original act of experience." He quotes, in support of this, the curious facts witnessed in persons suffering from aphasia. It is here that he puts forward the technical term which has so staggered some of his critics,—“The Neurotic Diagram;” for he not only assumes that the cerebral fibres have, from moment to moment of our consciousness, to be acting in a specific grouping or configuration, but he intimates that, in reminiscent consciousness, as distinguished from consciousness which is being sustained by peripheral impression, a “duplicated set of fibres” and an arrangement of “central molecules” are brought into play. If Mr. Cycles has been inside his own brain, or anybody else’s, when it was in full activity, and has seen all this going forward, well and good. But, in reading this chapter, and also other portions of the work, I was again and again reminded of Mr. Lewes’s remark, that there is a strong tendency in some modern thinkers to assume a much more detailed knowledge of cerebral operations than it is possible for them or for anybody, really to possess in the present state of physiological science. It is true that Mr. Cycles may say that in a case where experiment is so greatly barred as it is in the case of the brain, hypothesis is the only tool left for an inquirer to work with. But the fact of your grounds being perforce conjectural, is scarcely a justification for hurrying to positive conclusions.

A great part of the author’s big volume yet remains unnoticed. So far, not much more than its psychology has been dealt with. It would require another paper to give a detailed account of its philosophical doctrine. The author is a Realist in so far that he recognizes a physical system which exists independently of our consciousness, and gives, indeed, the occasions for the consciousness; but he says that this physical world is only “intellectually inferred” by us, not sensorially cognized. In his peculiar terminology, all that we know of it is that it is an “Executive System,” extending beyond ourselves, in connection with some of whose events, and only with some of them, sensations, &c., happen to us. But all our consciousness, he resolutely argues, is, whenever it arises, so much addition to the sum-total of Being otherwise existing; neither the beginnings nor the ceasings of consciousness having any effect quantitatively upon the operations of the Executive System of Nature. A little space must be made for extracts, just to hint the author’s arguments:—

“In all the brain-activities accompanying our experience, the physical and chemical changes go on in the same modes, observe the same order, and give the same quantitative results as if no sensation, thinking, and feeling had arisen.”

“Motion-in-general does not condition consciousness; the movements along with which our experience occurs have to be specific ones. They must be of certain rates, volumes, &c.”

“Either the added event of our consciousness is given by an increase of efficacy which develops in or along with Matter’s activity within our bodily frame, or else it is assignable to such an increase occurring along with Matter’s activity in certain larger, extra-bodily *situations* of the Cosmical Executive-System, operating at the same time on, in, and through the body.”

“In reminiscence and imagination, we can have repetition of sensations without the events in the larger Executive-System with which they primarily occurred, and indeed they can exist along with very different events there happening. We can in dream see the sun in the sky at midnight; by means of waking fancies, we can at any time, with more or less of completeness, subjectively enjoy tastes, odours, contacts, sounds. . . . So little as this does the general cosmical situation necessarily avail.”

“Strictly speaking, it is not the whole of the executive-operation in the volume, rate, &c., with which our consciousness arises, that connects causatively with the enlargement of efficacy giving it, but only *the small differentiating quantity* which heightens or abates the prior existing dynamics to just the specific volume, rate, &c., that is effective. But the intellect finds itself obliged to consider these differentiating dynamical quantities as *interchangeable*, since in the executive-operation itself they are simply equivalent, and subtractable and addable. . . . But each of them is found to be *singly ineffective* for conditioning consciousness.”

Here, again, it is obvious that if this reasoning can be fully established, it makes a great breach in Materialism; rendering it necessary, in order to account for the human Ego and its experience, to bring in a potentiality for varying the quantity of phenomena in a way which limits physical conceptions to their own field, and adds another field beyond. The author's chapters entitled, “The Ego,” and “Is there Evidence of Entity other than Matter?” contain much novel reasoning, in addition to the above. The general effect of it, though he does not utterly push home the conclusions,—always seeming to affect the reticence of an inquirer merely who only states the facts as he finds them,—is that our “egoistic-actualisation” is to be referred to a system of Mind which extends beyond the present limits of the Ego; for, as to the latter, he says the “irrationality” of some of the “happenings” of our pleasures and pains, and the persuasion we all have of possessing a physical power of interfering with material sequence, seem to intimate that a historic catastrophe has at some time befallen the egoistic consciousness of the race. I cannot follow up these matters; nor can I find space for explaining Mr. Cyples's modification of the old, commonly-adopted theory of Impression. I may add, that, as most readers who have accompanied me up to this point would very likely expect, he adopts, with respect to merely physical organization, the principle of Evolution,—remarking that, so far as concerns the development of all physiological difference, it is rational to suppose that the field of modification in the later species would be intra-uterine, not extra-uterine. His airiness in making the concession is, I suppose, explained by the fact, that it in no way affects his other main conclusions. It will give some idea of the range of the author's inquiries, if I quote the headings of a few of the chapters:—“The Emotions: their General Mode,” “Conscience,” “Is there a Rational Basis for Dogma?” “Hypothesis of the Soul,” “The Problem of Evil,” “The Organization of Experience.” Incidentally, the questions of Utilitarianism, Comtism, &c., are discussed at length.

I may just note a significant side-hint which the writer throws out in inquiring into the genesis of modern scepticism. He asks, whether

physical science, despite its priceless practical progress, has not really for a time simplified "cerebration" in respect of the chief generalizations of our meditative thinking on the human lot? I believe that he is right in thinking that this is so; and in that fact seems to lie whatever of hope there is of any recovery of Faith on the part of those who have lost it on merely intellectual grounds.

When turning over the pages, the eye not infrequently falls upon single remarks worth pondering. Take two or three specimens:—

"Scientifically regarded, the evil of falsehood is, that it is always in some degree destructive of reminiscence, which is the very stuff of our life."

"Bare potentiality is the conception of all others most native to man."

"A man may know whether or not he is improving or degenerating in conduct by noting if the emotions require larger or smaller sensory-cues. In the former case, he is certainly going backward."

"Such a word as 'ever' gives a reverberation more prolonged than suits mundane periods of time; it appears to the heart resoundingly to echo on into eternity."

In conclusion, I will only say that, though Mr. Cyples seems to me to indulge much too freely in hypothesis, and has, by the adoption of a difficult technology, placed a huge obstacle in the way of the popularization of his book, yet I believe no one who is a professed student in the higher fields of thought can neglect his volume, save at the risk of not being acquainted with some of the most laboriously worked-out philosophical thinking done for some time past.

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